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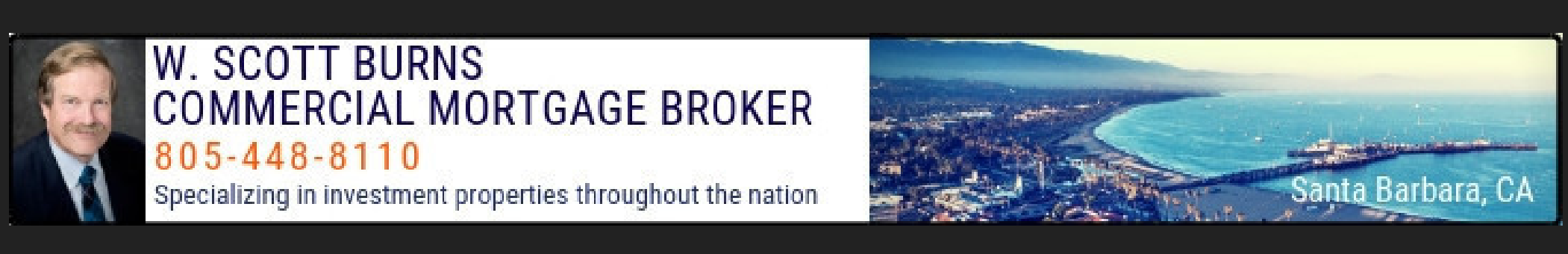

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PUBLIC HEALTH OPENS SCHOOL WAIVER APPLICATIONS AND FOCUSES ON RISING CASES IN ISLA VISTA

Entrance Sign to Isla Vista (edhat file photo)

COVID-19 / AUG 18 2020 05:41 PM / BYEDHAT STAFF / 10 COMMENTS / READS 1884

By edhat staff

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (PHD) announced elementary schools can now apply for waivers as the focus shifts to rising COVID-19 cases in Isla Vista.

During a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, an overall decrease in new case rates, hospitalizations, and intensive care unit (ICU) has made elementary schools within the county eligible to apply for waivers of in-person learning.

The process is now available for K-6 schools and is put in place by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The local waiver application form is being finalized and should be available later this week on PHD's website, however, all the necessary requirements are available on CDPH's website.

The school's superintendent, or equivalent position, must submit evidence of consultation with labor and parent organizations, must publish the school's reopening plans on the website of the local educational agency. PHD will then review the application, reopening plan, and local community epidemiological data while consulting with CDPH to make a determination whether to grant or deny the waiver.

Once approved the school must meet all the necessary guidelines and distancing to reopen.

If Santa Barbara County has an increase of COVID-19 cases, Governor Newsom has reportedly assured PHD the school's waiver would not be rescinded but will be monitored more closely.

OVERALL COVID-19 CASES DECREASE AS ISLA VISTA SPIKES

As of Monday, Santa Barbara County had a total of 7,454 COVID-19 cases. Of those, 278 cases are active, an 11.6% decrease over the past two weeks.

Santa Maria, the city with the most cases, had a 41% decrease in new cases over the past two weeks. Similarly, Santa Barbara decreased by 25% and Lompoc by 38%. Overall hospitalization rates decreased by 24% and ICU rates by 4%.

The concern is now focused on Goleta that increased by 18% and Isla Vista that went from 22 COVID-19 cases to 78 within a two week period, a 255% increase.

PHD Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso stated this is most likely reflective of students coming back to the area, high-density living, increased social movements, and gatherings.

This week the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is now being driven by people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s who don't know they are infected. Most of the young people either never developed symptoms or had mild symptoms.

"This increases the risk of spillovers to the most vulnerable: the elderly, the sick, people in long-term care, people who live in densely populated urban areas," said Dr. Takeshi Kasai, WHO's regional director for the Western Pacific.

Dr. Do-Reynoso stated a similar distribution of cases is being seen in California and Santa Barbara County as 66% of local cases are from people aged 18 to 49.

The decreased virus transmission in Santa Maria is believed to be due to focused outreach efforts, said Dr. Do-Reynoso. PHD will now be focusing on the younger population, especially in Isla Vista, and hopes to see results in several weeks similar to North County.

A new focused outreach video with the "Protect. Respect. Wear Your Mask." campaign features young people between 16 and 39 to encourage their peers to wear a mask and protect the health and safety of Santa Barbara County.

Santa Barbara County Protect and Respect - Wear your Mask

STATE RECONCILES BACKLOGGED DATA

On Monday, CDPH released retroactive data from the backlog in their CalREDIE system. PHD teams worked throughout the weekend to reconcile the numbers with the state's methods and all the numbers are accounted for in Santa Barbara County.

The positive testing rate decreased from 9.1% to 8% in just over a week and the case rate per 100,000 went from 323.4 to 158.9 in the past two weeks. While the decrease makes it possible for the state to allow elementary school waivers, Santa Barbara County still does not meet the threshold of these two categories to be off the monitoring list.

Dr. Do-Reynoso stated because of the restrictions by the state on what can reopen, it's critical to have good data. Due to the state's different methodology and lag times of data input, there will always be a difference between the state and county numbers, she said.

PHD has been very vocal of their frustrations of reconciling data and made their concerns known to CDPH, said Dr. Do-Reynoso.

As a reminder, even with a decrease in cases or being removed from the state's monitoring list, Santa Barbara County is unable to reopen new business sectors or allow indoor operations without a new health officer order from the Governor's office.

TUESDAY'S NUMBERS

PHD is reporting an additional death of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19. The individual was in the 50-69 age range, with underlying health conditions, resided in the City of Santa Barbara and unincorporated area of Mission Canyon, and is associated with a congregate living facility. Deaths are reported when a death certificate is processed listing COVID-19 as a cause or a significant condition. The process can take several days and up to 2 months to finalize if pending Coroner verification. Total COVID-19 related deaths in Santa Barbara County are now 81.

There were 29 new cases reported bringing the grand total to 7,481 with 256 of those active. There are currently 59 hospitalizations including 22 in the ICU.

Two previously identified cases were removed. A case can be removed for being out of the county, duplicate, or non-positive lab result, etc., according to PHD.

More data can be found at https://publichealthsbc.org/status-reports/.

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10 COMMENTS

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First Commented

420722 AUG 18, 2020 05:50 PM REPLY

Well this is fantastic news. Finally. One step closer to ending all this nonsense. Next, get off the monitoring list and open all currently shuttered businesses.

A-1597799219 AUG 18, 2020 06:06 PM REPLY

420722 do you truly believe this virus is not dangerous at all? Your relentless boasts of your recklessness and constant belittling of people who are concerned and taking this seriously is getting old. Dude, just go kiss a stranger and sit in a bar and send your kids to school in another state or whatever you feel you need and have the "right" to do, that's fine.

420722 AUG 18, 2020 06:29 PM REPLY

I feel the same way about the we should still be shutdown people @6:06. It's getting old to me. Many are ready to move forward. Don't really know why I stick around commenting here, to relieve frustration I guess but this place has mostly become for the people who are in favor of a lifetime shutdown while the rest of us try to live the most normal lives we can considering all the restrictions. Have you looked outside? There are people everywhere doing fun things as if nothing is happening not just me. Traffic is crazy. We both are entitled to have an opinion and live life how we each see fit. You can't accept that I've chosen not to act and live out of fear the same way it bothers me that some of you are in my mind way over the top.

Comment has been deleted by edhat

CHICO BERKELEY AUG 18, 2020 09:08 PM REPLY

You cant stand logic?
Students don't care about your feelings.
You have obviously taken the wrong color pill.

Comment has been deleted by edhat

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CHICO BERKELEY AUG 18, 2020 09:09 PM REPLY

That was meant for 606pm
Sorry

RUNNING_MIKE AUG 18, 2020 09:14 PM REPLY

So agree with you. Need to open everything and get things back to normal. This "plan-demic" is no worse than the flu.

A-1597814742 AUG 18, 2020 10:25 PM REPLY

Running Mike you are 100%, absolutely wrong. Not at all the same as the flu. Read some grown-up literature once in a while. That tiresome myth was debunked as soon as this took over the globe and continues to be put to rest by scientists and doctors to this day.

YIANNIS93101 AUG 18, 2020 09:14 PM REPLY

Excuse me isla vista....UCSB, new arriving students. I live at friendship manor, senior retirement living. We've been lucky all summer long, PLUS we didn't have deal with the students crazy driving. Now the students trickle back and our COVID cases increase since they've been here! Go home! Classes are online, why are you here anyway? And don't party, don't screw around.....you've got a home full of seniors living her and non of want to get ill, or worse!

Comment has been deleted by edhat

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SEARAY AUG 18, 2020 10:23 PM REPLY

If classes are online why are students coming back?

GCHEADLEY AUG 19, 2020 06:49 AM REPLY

The "Isla Vista" sign is looking nice! Thanks to whomever is responsible for keeping that up.

✓ Your comment has been posted.

VVORKER AUG 19, 2020 07:08 AM REPLY

Welcome to the Isla Vista
Such a lovely place (such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
They livin' it up at the Isla Vista
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
Bring your alibis
Mirrors on the ceiling
The pink champagne on ice
And she said, "We are all just prisoners here of our own device"
And in the master's chambers
They gathered for the feast
They stab it with their steely knives
But they just can't kill the virus...

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Your name
vvorker

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vvorking@gmail.com

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